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URBANISM AND THE ENEMY DACIAN ARCHITECTURE ON THE COLUMN OF TRAJAN

Within the corpus of extant public monuments in Rome, the depictions of architecture found throughout the Column of Trajan frieze are unique, not only for their sheer quantity (over 300 different illustrated buildings), but because they include dozens of detailed representations of architecture associated with the barbarian enemy. Rather than following the stereotypical huts that typically define enemy architecture in Roman art, the 88 Dacian architectural structures form a distinct and well developed architectural typology. They are, furthermore, a critical component of the portrayal of Romans and barbarians on the frieze. Nevertheless, these intriguing depictions have been examined in scholarship primarily as a means of reconstructing architectural practice in Dacia. In this article, I take a new approach to explore the significance of these depictions: their inspiration, how they contribute to the characterization of Dacian culture on the frieze, and what they can tell us about official visions of identity and architecture in the Trajanic period.¹

Introduction

This article is divided into three main sections. In the first section, I establish that the development of a detailed and robust architectural typology for the Dacian enemy indicates the importance of Dacian architecture for the message of the column. In the second section, I argue that certain features of the depicted Dacian architecture suggest that the creative forces behind the column were drawing on actual architectural practice in Dacia at the time. I must emphasize here that I do not mean to imply that the driving goal in this was to accurately recreate Dacian architectural practice. Yet the frieze does seem to indicate some basic familiarity with notable features of the Dacian architectural landscape. The third section will explore the implications of the omission on the frieze of one prominent feature of the Dacian architectural landscape: the sophistication, some might say urbanity, of the largest fortified Dacian settlements. Instead, on the column Dacian fortifications are depicted as empty. This anachronistically casts urbanity as a distinctly Roman phenomenon.

In my analysis, I define a structure as “Dacian” if it belongs to an unfamiliar, clearly non-Roman architectural type, or is part of an urban landscape incorporating buildings of clearly non-Roman architectural types, or is associated with the Dacian populace through narrative (for example, structures under explicit Dacian occupation).² While questions of who designed what aspects of the column and frieze are intriguing, they cannot be sufficiently explored in this venue.³ Therefore, in discussions of

¹ This article draws on research that I conducted in the course of a broader study of the architectural depictions on the Column of Trajan (Wolfram [2007]; Wolfram Thill [2010]; [2011]; [2012] 67–119). As part of this study I compiled a catalog of all architectural depictions on the frieze; this catalog has been published in abbreviated form on the *American Journal of Archaeology*’s website (www.ajaonline.org) under “Supplemental Data”, in association with Wolfram Thill (2010). All statistics presented here are derived from this catalog. I am very grateful to the organizers of this conference for the opportunity to further explore an often overlooked category of these depictions, and to refine my approach to the material. I also extend my thanks to the many participants at this conference who offered helpful and encouraging comments on this paper. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the 22nd *International Limes (Roman Frontiers) Congress* in Ruse, Bulgaria in 2012, where I also benefited from many insightful comments from my fellow participants. Thanks are due as well to those who have read earlier drafts of this material, particularly Monika Truemper, Sheila Dillon, Nicola Terrenato, Lidewijde De Jong, Mary Sturgeon, and Richard Talbert. All mistakes that remain are my own. Unless otherwise noted, all of the images presented here are my own photographs of the Column of Trajan casts in the Museo della Civiltà Romana in Rome. My deepest thanks to the museum for permission to publish my photographs.

² For classification of structures as “Roman” or “Dacian”, see Wolfram (2007); Wolfram Thill (2010) 28.

³ For discussion of the artistry and patronage of the Column of Trajan frieze, see Richmond (1982) 3; Rockwell (1985); Coulston (1988) 33, 53–62, 96–97, 102–117, 120, 167–171, 371; (1990b) 300, 302–303; Lepper, Frere (1988) 16–17, 23,

artistry for the depictions I use the shorthand term “the production team” in a specifically neutral sense, to refer collectively to anyone and everyone involved in the design and execution of the reliefs. Limits of space also preclude a full discussion of the visibility of the frieze and its architectural depictions,⁴ but in this article, the details of all architectural depictions are treated as purposeful and potentially significant, regardless of their height on the column.

Dacian architectural depictions have figured in scholarship on the Column of Trajan in two respects. Firstly, they have been seen as a means of identifying specific geographic locations in Dacia, primarily with an eye to reconstructing the military campaigns of the Dacian Wars. Secondly, they have been employed as a means of filling out the archaeological and historical record.⁵ Neither of these lines of inquiry has proven particularly fruitful. This is especially true for the search for specific geographic locations, since in large part the depicted Dacian buildings are better understood as generic structures, rather than portraits of particular historic buildings in contemporary Dacia. This places the Dacian architecture firmly within the framework of other architectural depictions on the frieze. Excepting the notably elaborate depiction of the famous Bridge over the Danube in Scenes XCVIII–C,⁶ none of the military or civilian buildings depicted on the frieze can be positively identified as a representation of an actual historic building.⁷ At the same time, the generic nature of the depicted Dacian architecture traditionally has excluded these illustrations from scholarship on architectural depictions in general, given that such studies are concerned primarily with illustrations of identifiable buildings.⁸

While the generic nature of the depictions of Dacian architecture on the Column of Trajan precludes their use in historical reconstructions, either of topography or architecture, it does not mean their study is an intellectual dead-end. Rather, a directed, systematic examination of the depictions can reveal important patterns and shed light on topics from the design of the frieze to the conception of urbanism in Trajanic Rome.

Developing a Dacian Architectural Typology

The first indication of the importance of the Dacian architecture is its distribution throughout the frieze. Architecture specifically associated with the Dacians appears early on in Scene XXV and is present throughout the frieze until Scene CLII. The significance of this architecture is indicated not only by its prevalence along the frieze, but by its specific position. Several important illustrations of Dacian architecture, including the first and last, are positioned along the northwest vertical axis of the

27–30; Settis (1988) 100–102; Coarelli (2000) 30–31; Hölscher (2002) 127–128; Claridge (2007) 467; Galinier (2007) 8–30; Packer (2008) 471–472.

⁴ Discussions of visibility for the column has ranged from the logistical to the theoretical. An example of the former approach can be found in Beckmann’s (2011, 89–106) suggestion that certain scenes of the Column of Trajan were borrowed for the Column of Marcus Aurelius not for their content, but because those scenes were at a height that could be seen easily from surrounding buildings. De Angelis (2011), in contrast, has focused on more theoretical issues, interpreting the visibility of monuments such as the Column of Trajan in light of the ancient concepts of μέγεθος and ἀκρίβεια. For extensive discussion of the problems (both logistical and conceptual) for the visibility of the Column of Trajan frieze, see Galinier (2007) 134–163; see also Coulston (1988) 13–14, 18, 30–33, 51, 107–111; (1990b) 296, 299, 301, 303–304; Settis (1988) 87, 202–206; (2005) 65, 68–70; Hölscher (1991a) 262–263; (2000) 90–91; (2002) 139–140; Claridge (1993) 22; Packer (1997) 113; Coarelli (2000) 19–21; Zanker (2000) vii; Clarke (2003) 35; Dillon (2006) 259; Wolfram Thill (2011) 285.

⁵ See for example Davies (1920); Lepper, Frere (1988); Antonescu (2009).

⁶ For identifications of the depicted bridge in Scenes XCVIII–C as the historical Bridge over the Danube, built by Apollodorus of Damascus and considered in its time to be one of the engineering wonders of the Roman world, see e.g. Turcan-Déléani (1958) 150; Gauer (1977) 13; Coulston (1988) 26; Lepper, Frere (1988) 149–151; Coarelli (2000) 162. Notably, the depicted bridge stretches over an extended length of two scenes and looks nothing like any other architectural structure on the frieze.

⁷ For the importance of generic representations of architecture in Roman art, see Sobocinski (2009); Wolfram Thill (2010); (2011); (2012). For a rejection of the oft-cited identification of the civilian settlement in Scene LXXIX as Ancona (or Brindisi), see Wolfram Thill (2012) 73–83.

⁸ The Column of Trajan in general has been excluded from studies of architectural depictions in Roman monumental reliefs; see Maier (1985); Grunow (2002); Quante-Schöttler (2002). Targeted discussions of the architectural depictions of the Column of Trajan have focused on the architecture associated either with peaceful civilian settlements (Turcan-Déléani [1958]) or the Roman military (Coulston [1990a]; Wolfram Thill [2010]).

column (Pl. 55, Fig. 1).⁹ This axis has become known as the “Victory axis” because it features the vertical alignment of some of the most important events of the implied narrative of the frieze, including the initial crossing of the Danube (Scenes III–IV), the Victory figure marking the end of the First Dacian War (Scene LXXVIII), the Bridge Over the Danube (Scenes XCVIII–C), and the suicide of Decebalus (Scene CXLV).¹⁰ The inclusion of Dacian architecture along this axis calls attention to the architecture and highlights its importance for the themes of the frieze as a whole.

In addition, four other illustrations of the destruction of Dacian architecture, a prevalent theme of the frieze, appear directly along the opposite southeast axis.¹¹ If taken more broadly, this southeast axis may also encompass two additional depictions of the destruction of Dacian architecture: Scene LVII (definite destruction) and Scenes XCV–XCVI (possible destruction¹²). This axis also includes the famous scene of Romans executing a *testudo* against a Dacian fortress (Scene LXXI), as well as two depictions of Dacians ineffectively besieging Roman fortifications (Scenes XCIV and CXXXV).¹³ Thus Dacian architecture not only features prominently in the northwest Victory axis, but defines the opposite axis as focused on the contrast between the Roman and Dacian abilities to defend their settlements.

The contrast between Roman and Dacian architecture is established not only by narrative, but also encompasses the number of buildings and depicted construction material.¹⁴ The most notable means of differentiation, however, is in architectural form. Just as the position of the Dacian architecture is carefully planned, the appearance of Dacian architecture is not rendered randomly. Instead, it has repeated characteristic features and falls into definable types. This allows Dacian architecture to be easily identified from, and compared with, Roman structures. Several scholars, including D. Antonescu and J.C.N. Coulston, previously have identified Dacian architectural types on the frieze.¹⁵ Because of this, and because my primary focus is the significance of the types, rather than a catalog of their forms, I will only briefly review the most important types here.

The most obvious and striking Dacian architectural type is the large fortification or stronghold. Such fortifications appear in various guises, and often are so large that they span and connect a series of scenes (e.g. Scenes XCIX–CI). These depicted fortifications have been linked in scholarship with the strongholds in the archaeological record of Dacia commonly known as *davae*.

One building type of particular interest that occurs in association with the fortifications is what I have termed the “tower building”, gabled buildings characterized by especially wide windows on two visible sides, and by their position behind fortification walls. This type may appear first in the schematic forms of Scene LXXVI, but is clearly present in the fourth (Scene CXI, Pl. 56, Figs. 2–3), fifth (Scenes CXV–CXVI), sixth (Scenes CXIX–CXXII) and seventh (Scenes CXXIV–CXXV) of the Dacian strongholds. These towers may in fact indicate a particular stronghold: if so, the proposed sequence of the frieze would illustrate Dacian preparations for defense (Scene CXI), initial Roman attack (Scenes CXV–CXVI), Dacian despair and abandonment of the stronghold (Scenes CXIX–CXXII), and the Roman conquest thereof (Scenes CXXIV–CXXV). If these are indeed the same stronghold, it is tempting to suggest an identification of Sarmizegetusa, the Dacian capital, especially since Scene CXXIV seems to show the discovery and capture of Dacian treasure, as well as perhaps a royal tumulus.¹⁶ All of these strongholds, however, are depicted very differently, making the collapsing of their identities into a single location difficult.

⁹ Wolfram Thill (2011) 296.

¹⁰ For recent discussion, see e.g. Coulston (1990b) 299; Hölscher (1991b) 290–291; Coarelli (2000) 19; Koeppel (2002) 250; Settis (2005) 79; Galinier (2007) 85–88.

¹¹ For the importance of destruction in the portrayal of Dacian architecture on the frieze, see Wolfram Thill (2011).

¹² Wolfram Thill (2011) n. 38.

¹³ The other depiction of Dacians besieging Romans (Scene XXXII) falls generally along the northwest Victory axis.

¹⁴ Although Dacian architecture is well-represented on the frieze by 88 individual structures, the 225 Roman structures mean that Roman architecture is clearly numerically dominant. In addition, Roman and Dacian buildings are characterized by stone and wooden construction, respectively. For full discussion see Wolfram Thill (2010); (2011).

¹⁵ Coulston (1990a) 46–48; Antonescu (2009).

¹⁶ *Infra* n. 18.

There appears to be a special relationship on the frieze between Dacian architecture and round or cylindrical forms.¹⁷ Notable examples include the round palisade behind the Dacian defenses in Scene XXV (Pl. 56, Fig. 4), and the squat “tumulus” structure outside the seventh Dacian stronghold (Scene CXXIV) (Pl. 57, Figs. 5–6).¹⁸ While these are unique structures, the seven remaining cylindrical structures can be divided into two interrelated types, distinguished primarily by construction material. The first type is represented by the three cylindrical buildings with rectangular doors that are found in the Dacian stronghold of Scenes CXIX–CXXII. These buildings feature unusual elements beyond their cylindrical shape, namely a ridged roof with a crowning boss (Pl. 56–57, Figs. 7–8). The same shape and unusual features appear in the second type, comprising the four stone buildings in Scene LXII (Pl. 57, Fig. 9).

While the identity of these stone cylindrical structures is debated,¹⁹ I argue strongly that the buildings represent Dacian architecture. Firstly, non-generic buildings associated with Roman culture on the frieze conform exclusively to familiar, easily identifiable features and types, such as an amphitheater or portico. Secondly, the buildings of Scene LXII are clearly related to the buildings of Scenes CXIX–CXXII, which share the same overall shape and distinctive roof, and which appear in a clear Dacian context. Thirdly, the inverted trapezoid molding above the doors in Scene LXII is also seen on the entrance structure of a definitively Dacian palisade in Scene LXVII.

The rock-cut canal below a round fortification in Scene LXXIV (Pl. 57, Fig. 10) is not a *de facto* Dacian structure,²⁰ but like the cylindrical buildings of Scene LXII there are several reasons to interpret it as Dacian. Logically, it makes sense for a rock-cut feature to be Dacian, since a Roman army would hardly cut such a feature on campaign, although logic is not always a strict guiding principal on the frieze, particularly when it comes to construction.²¹ The motif of Roman soldiers drinking from the canal may suggest the *topos* whereby the Roman army and Roman empire appropriate the resources, both natural and built, of conquered territory. This makes sense within the immediate context of the narrative: adjacent to the canal, Roman soldiers carry loot out of a captured Dacian stronghold. The unusual round shape of the fortification above the canal may also imply that the assemblage is to be read as Dacian. Taking these lines of evidence in combination, it seems safe to understand the canal as Dacian architecture. This is striking, given the engineering expertise implied by the Dacian canal.

Depicted Architecture and the Architecture of Dacia

We thus have on the Column of Trajan frieze a suite of well-defined architectural types associated with the barbarian enemy. In monumental reliefs such an architectural typology is unprecedented and unique. Even the apparently contemporary Great Trajanic Frieze employs huts, rather than complex structures, to represent barbarian architecture.²² The origins of the Dacian architecture on the Column of Trajan, therefore, must be sought outside of sculpture.

We know from literary descriptions that triumphal paintings included depictions of enemy architecture under attack, but since no examples survive, it is impossible to evaluate their influence on the

¹⁷ Wolfram Thill (2010) 37.

¹⁸ Coarelli ([2000] 197) suggests that the round building outside of the Scene CXXIV stronghold is a tumulus for the Dacian kings. Other authors limit their description to the basic form of the building (Lepper, Frere [1988] 169; Koeppel [1991] 99). Although a unique form on the frieze, the structure has no further distinguishing features besides its unmarked roof. As intriguing as this structure is, it is nearly impossible to see clearly without the use of scaffolding: the casts in the Museo della Civiltà Romana in Rome break along the middle of this structure (see Fig. 5), as unfortunately do Coarelli's ([2000] pl. 152–153) photographs of the column itself. The two halves of the structure are not even on the same page in Koeppel's ([1991] 199–200) and Lepper, Frere's ([1988] pl. 93–94) publications of the frieze.

¹⁹ Previous identifications include shrines to the Roman dead, Dacian religious structures, domestic structures, royal tombs, or housing for stolen Roman standards; for discussion see Lepper, Frere (1988) 104; Coulston (1990a) 46.

²⁰ Lepper, Frere (1988) 116, 119; Hölscher (1991b) 288–289.

²¹ Wolfram Thill (2010).

²² The date and subject matter of the fragmentary monument known as the Great Trajanic Frieze are debated, but most scholars agree that it is a Trajanic monument celebrating the victories in the Dacian Wars. For general studies of the Great Trajanic Frieze, see Pallottino (1938); Koeppel (1969); Gauer (1973); Leander Touati (1987); Philipp (1991); Hölscher (2002).

depicted architecture of the column.²³ There are several lines of evidence, however, which suggest that the production team was somewhat familiar with specific peculiarities of Dacian architecture. The production team seems to have consciously chosen to acknowledge and utilize some aspects of Dacia's unique architectural tradition, while at the same time ignoring other aspects, in order to draw the greatest contrast between Dacian and Roman civilizations.

The first line of evidence is the depiction of Dacian fortifications. Archaeology has shown that military construction surrounding many Dacian strongholds consisted of a distinct type known as *murus Dacicus*, a technically sophisticated construction method that marked high-status settlements in Dacia.²⁴ This technique consisted of walls of timber-and-rubble cores faced with monumental ashlar skins; it is distinguished from the similar *murus Gallicus* by rows of stabilizing transverse timber cross-beams, as well as the ashlar skins that protected the walls against battering rams and fire.²⁵ This method of facing with cut stone blocks seems to derive from contact with Hellenistic kingdoms, and was developed centuries before Roman engineers reportedly came to Dacia under Domitian's treaty.²⁶

On the frieze, Dacian fortifications are shown with two different construction methods. All Dacian fortifications are shown at least in part with an exterior facing of ashlar masonry (e.g. Scene CXI; Pl. 56, Fig. 2). This is an unusual and notable feature to ascribe to northern barbarians, who otherwise are characterized in Roman literature and art by their relatively primitive fortifications. One may argue, however, that this is coincidence, that the production team simply fell back on convention when illustrating fortifications, no matter who occupied them. The other construction method employed for Dacian fortifications belies this argument.

In Scenes CXIII–CXVI, the climactic encounter between Roman forces and a Dacian fortress, the ashlar skin has been omitted, to reveal the interior construction (Pl. 58, Fig. 11). Angled, irregular shapes are interrupted by neat lines of roundels, perhaps representing the timber cross-beams. Yet in the fortifications immediately preceding (Scene CXI; Pl. 56, Fig. 2) and following (Scenes CXIX–CXXII), the walls of what the narrative suggests to be the same fortress appear with masonry intact.²⁷ Even within the same siege the polygonal fortification walls appear suddenly as if made of stone, probably to emphasize the mighty task of the Roman soldiers tearing down the walls (Pl. 59, Fig. 12).²⁸

I argue in favor of interpretations that have seen this as a representation of *murus Dacicus*. Here the production team seems to be making a special effort to call attention to the interior of the Dacian fortress walls, an area of important distinction between Roman and Dacian construction techniques. Similarly, in Scene CXXXII, when the cut stone walls of the Dacian defenses turn to reveal their interior sides, those sides are specifically depicted as being made of timber, despite the fact that *murus Dacicus* typically featured ashlar skins on both sides of its walls (Pl. 58, Fig. 13). Nowhere on the column do similar interior timber features appear on Roman fortifications, despite the implied inclusion of these features (in the form of roundels) on the exteriors.

²³ For the inclusion of architectural depictions in triumphs and triumphal painting, see Torelli (1982) 119–125; Coulston (1988) 165; Hölscher (1991b) 293–294; (2006) 37, 39; Holliday (1997) 129–130, 134–137; La Rocca (2000) 63; Settis (2005) 75–77; Favro (2006) 25–26; Lusnia (2006) 286; Wolfram Thill (2011) 309. For the influence of triumphal paintings on the Column of Trajan in particular, see Lehmann-Hartleben (1926) 2, 29; Torelli (1982) 119–125; Coulston (1988) 124, 131–132; (1990b) 295; (2003) 420–421; Settis (1988) 94–96; Hölscher (1991b) 293–294; Coarelli (2000) 11; Koeppel (2002) 248; Beckmann (2003) 111–113; Wolfram Thill (2011) 309.

²⁴ Coulston (1988) 152, 154; (1990a) 47; Lepper, Frere (1988) 108, 144, 165–167, 270; Lockyear (2004) 36–37, 42; Oltean (2007) 209.

²⁵ Richmond ([1982] 41) makes no distinction and sees the construction represented on the column as *murus Gallicus*.

²⁶ There has been a curious idea in scholarship that the more “advanced” Dacian stone fortifications on the column represent works by Roman engineers for Decebalus as part of ceasefires under Domitian and Trajan (for discussion see Rossi [1971] 144; Coulston [1988] 151; [1990a] 46; Lepper, Frere [1988] 64, 265). The extensive use of ashlar masonry for fortifications in Dacia clearly dates back to the first century BCE (Condurachi, Daicoviciu [1971] 102; Lepper, Frere [1988] 270; Haynes, Hanson [2004] 14–15), and there is no evidence for Roman influence in the depictions themselves.

²⁷ Lepper, Frere (1988) 167. Richmond ([1982] 40) inexplicably interprets the former structure as made of turf, and the latter specifically of ashlar, although he does not specify his reasons for this distinction.

²⁸ Wolfram Thill (2011) n. 29.

The decision to emphasize the interior of the Dacian fortifications in Scenes CXIII–CXVI may have been meant to highlight and distinguish the climax of the various assaults on Dacian strongholds. More importantly, this masonry would point out a theoretical weakness for Dacian military technology, one which would lead to the Dacian downfall in the face of superior Roman military skill. This may be compared to the use of ashlar (illogical for campaign camps) to evoke strength and impregnability in the several depictions of Roman legionaries under siege (Scenes XXXII, XCIV, CXXXIII–CXXXV). The use of polygonal masonry for the climax of Dacian strongholds would characterize these fortifications as primitively barbaric, strange, and above all different from Roman fortifications.

There are other aspects of the Dacian fortifications that suggest some knowledge regarding actual fortresses in Dacia. The depicted fortification walls often curve and rise to indicate the hilly terrain on which the *davae* were located (e.g. Scenes CXI, CXIII–CXVI, CXX–CXXII, CXXV; Pl. 57, Fig. 8). Six different Dacian strongholds on the frieze employ multiple lines of fortifications, another feature found in the *davae* (Scenes XXV, XCV–XCVI²⁹, CXI, CXIII–CXVI, CXIX–CXXII, CXXIV–CXXV³⁰; Pl. 56–57, Figs. 2–4, 8). There are thus four lines of evidence — the *murus Dacicus* cores, the ashlar exteriors, the mountaintop location, and the interlocking fortification lines — that suggest that the depictions of the Dacian fortifications on the frieze are based to some extent on the historical reality of Dacia.

Beyond the fortifications, there is also general correspondence between the many tower buildings on the frieze and the frequency of rectangular towers in the Dacian archaeological record.³¹ Stilted structures are a definitively Dacian feature on the frieze (although the forms of the three depicted examples vary greatly; Scenes XXV [Pl. 56, Fig. 4], LVII) and may have parallels in some recovered buildings, such as one example in Sarmizegetusa (Grădișteța Muncelului).³² Elaborate water systems are features that, while an odd attribute for barbarians, nevertheless appear on the frieze and are recorded archaeologically at Sarmizegetusa.³³ The emphasis on round plans, particularly the prominent round palisade behind the fortification walls of Scene XXV and the series of unusual cylindrical buildings in Scene LXII, is intriguing in light of the three round monumental structures of the sanctuary area at Sarmizegetusa.³⁴ These would have been remarkable constructions: the largest featured a palisade-like arrangement of 108 stone pillars and 30 stone blocks in 3 concentric rings.³⁵ One can imagine news of just such features reaching the production team of the column.

The structures on the frieze are certainly not unambiguous reproductions of archaeological features. I have demonstrated, however, that there are multiple lines of evidence that the production team drew upon an (at least vaguely) knowledgeable source regarding actual Dacian architecture. By including loosely specified indigenous architecture, the production team added to an impression of the documentation of the exotic locales dominated by the Roman army.³⁶ Complex indigenous architecture and massive fortifications highlighted the accomplishments of the Roman army, and justified the time and cost spent in the wars. The Dacian buildings that do appear are almost always specifically timber, and are more often than not bizarre — but they are still complex buildings, not on par with but

²⁹ For the identification of the walls in Scenes XCV–XCVI as Dacian architecture, see Wolfram Thill (2011) n. 38.

³⁰ The straight wall that meets the curving wall at an angle may represent a Roman fortification within the Dacian stronghold.

³¹ For the archaeology of towers in Dacia, and their possible connection to elite residences, see Coulston (1990a) 47; Lockyear (2004) 36, 42, 45–48; Stefan (2005) 601; Oltean (2007) 209.

³² See G. Florea in this volume.

³³ Lockyear (2004) 45; Stefan (2005) 76–81.

³⁴ For plans and descriptions of the round structures of the main sanctuary in Sarmizegetusa, see Diaconescu (2004) 125; Lockyear (2004) 57–59; Stefan (2005) 42–47, 52–58.

³⁵ Lockyear (2004) 57–63, 69. In reference to the four elaborate stone cylindrical buildings in Scene LXII, Coulston ([1988] 153; [1990a] 47) notes the frequency of round sacred structures in Dacia; he does not, however, see any inspirational connection between these phenomena and the frieze. He ([1990a] 47–48) sees more inspiration in the round timber huts also attested in the archaeological record.

³⁶ For the importance of exotic conquest for the frieze, see Coulston (1988) 37; (2003). For a similar function of triumphal paintings, see also Holliday (1997) 132–134; Hölscher (2006) 37. For the importance of the display of exotica from around the empire in Rome, see Hope (2000) 83.

comparable to Roman structures. The Dacian architecture on the frieze is the accomplishment of an inferior enemy, the glory of which is now appropriated by Rome.

Urbanism and the Enemy

What is avoided in these depictions, however, is as intriguing as what is included, a topic that has not seen extensive discussion. Specifically, Dacian strongholds are never depicted as urban. With the possible exception of water systems, many of the more expressly urban features found in the archaeological record of Dacia, such as paved meeting spaces, dense congregations of houses, and sanctuaries populated by multiple monumental structures, are not explicitly present on the frieze.³⁷ This is despite the fact that these probably would have been the most likely features to impress themselves on the memories of the many participants of the Dacian Wars available for consultation in Rome. Architecture within the Dacian strongholds on the frieze is noticeably scarce: not counting tower buildings, whose height and position suggest a more military function connected to the fortifications, only 14 Dacian structures appear within strongholds, 8 of them in Scenes CXIX–CXXII, where they are on fire and stand in with Dacian suicide for the destruction of Dacian culture at Dacian hands (Pl. 56, Fig. 7).³⁸

All of this seems more than can possibly be ascribed to coincidence. The production team appears to have consciously drawn distinctions between Roman and Dacian settlements, although without any strict adherence to reality. In fact, they studiously neglected to depict any sort of Dacian urban landscape at all. Certainly no accurate comparison of the Dacian strongholds to the average Roman colony in the area was attempted. Given the relative amenities of many Dacian and provincial towns at the time, such a comparison may not have been favorable to the latter. The choices made in the depictions of civilian occupations are paralleled by a similar paradox in military architecture, where massive Dacian fortifications are revealed to be timber-and-rubble, while ephemeral Roman camps are depicted consistently as stone.³⁹ The depicted Dacian architecture was thus a crucial part of a carefully contrived presentation of the world outside of Rome. In this presentation, the Roman world was urban, with theaters and amphitheaters in even the smallest towns. The barbarian world, in contrast, was distinctly non-urban. Urbanism was something critical that must not only be given to the Romans, but denied to the Dacians.

This foundational conceptual link between urbanism and Rome would have implications well beyond the Column of Trajan frieze, affecting attitudes towards provincial management and even Rome itself. One must consider, for example, who the audience for this message was: the settlers in the newly created urban settlements in conquered Dacia, or the citizen of historically, densely urban Rome. The contemporary Tropaeum of Trajan at Adamklissi notably has no depictions of architecture (Pl. 59, Fig. 14). The Column of Trajan purports to tell the story of the spread of Rome into distant territory. But the story it tells of urbanism and Rome may say more about Trajan's grandiose architectural ambitions and legacy in the capital, than the indigenous architectural habit hundreds of miles away.

³⁷ The archaeology and interpretation of the fortified strongholds known as *davae* is still a contested field; see e.g. MacKendrick (1975); Glodariu (1976); Gudea (1979); Bârzu (1980); Muşat (1980); Bogdan-Cătănicu (1981); MacKenzie (1986); Diaconescu (1997); (2004); (2008); Oltean, Hanson (2003); (2007); Hanson, Haynes (2004); Lockyear (2004); Oltean (2004); (2007); Stefan (2005). For the purposes of this present analysis, it is not important whether the *davae* were "urban" or "proto-urban", whether they are evidence of a centralized social organization or unrelated independent strongholds, whether they were all destroyed in the Dacian Wars or unaffected by a relatively temporary Roman occupation. What is important here is that some Dacian strongholds had features associated elsewhere with sophisticated urban settlements.

³⁸ Wolfram Thill (2011) 297.

³⁹ For the anachronistic depiction of Roman military fortifications as made of stone, see Wolfram Thill (2010).

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